4th March 1965] [Mr. Speaker]

'Indian Express' of this morning. It is my view that such a statement should have been made initially in the Assembly. I would like this to be referred to the Committee of Privileges.'

Only on this matter, hon. Members spoke yesterday.

SRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM : But the matter was not read on the floor of the House.

MR. SPEAKER : Very well, I quite follow.

Hon. Members are aware that yesterday, the Hon. the Leader of the House raised a matter of privilege in regard to the statement issued to the Press by the Leaders of the Opposition Parties as to what took place in the Business Advisory Committee and, after hearing the Leader of the Opposition and Sri M. Kalyanasundaram, I reserved my ruling.

May has stated that 'the publication of proceedings of committees or of draft reports of committees before they have been reported to the House will constitute a breach of privilege.'

It is also a well established parliamentary practice that the proceedings of the committees of the House or the evidence tendered before them must be treated as confidential, and are not to be disclosed.

Though in the instance case, the decisios of the Business Advisory Committee as regards the programme of the House has been reported to the House, and as such there has been no premature disclosure, however, to diclose what all took place in the committee is not in order, since it will not be conducive for the committees to function freely and effectively. In this connection, I want to inform this House that in 1938 a similar case with regard to the business of the Select Committee arose and the then Speaker observed that it was desirable to keep the proceedings confidential and not reveal all the difficulties of the Select Committee to the Legislature. In another place the Speaker ruled that an hon. Member should not reveal what all took place in the Select Committee. Then that hon. Member said : 'I am sorry, I withdraw.' By referring to these cases, what I want to stress is that the proceedings of the Committee are not open to the public or the Press and in the Committee hon. Members express their different opinions frankly whether they are right or wrong. There can be no objection to revealing the decision and in a way, if the rules permit, to question the conclusion in the Assembly but it will not be conducive to express outside what took place between one hon. Member and another hon. Member. A proper convention or procedure must be evolved in regard to this matter and therefore I am not referring this matter to the Committee of Privileges. I leave it to the good sense of hon. Members.